

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to an electronic monitoring program for
3 tracking lost persons; providing legislative intent to
4 encourage counties to implement county lifesaver projects;
5 describing the components of such a project; designating
6 the Department of Law Enforcement as the administrative
7 agency; providing procedures for starting the program in a
8 county; providing for applying for state grant funds and
9 requiring local matching funds; providing for prioritizing
10 and prorating grants; requiring the county sheriff's
11 office or other lead agency to use the funds for specified
12 purchases and training; requiring the solicitation of
13 private moneys and the achievement of financial
14 independence for the program within a specified time;
15 providing an appropriation; providing an effective date.

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17 WHEREAS, more than 5 million United States residents have
18 Alzheimer's disease and more than 50 percent of those
19 individuals wander and become lost, and

20 WHEREAS, autism is the fastest-growing serious
21 developmental disability in the United States, and many autistic
22 individuals wander and are attracted to water, causing drowning
23 to be the leading cause of death for children who have autism,
24 and

25 WHEREAS, Project Lifesaver is a search-and-rescue program
26 that can quickly find wandering individuals who have Alzheimer's
27 disease, autism, Down's syndrome, or other mental impairments,
28 and

29 WHEREAS, Project Lifesaver was established in Virginia in
 30 1999 and has been implemented by law enforcement agencies and
 31 public safety agencies across the country, and

32 WHEREAS, agencies that sponsor local lifesaver projects
 33 have stated that the program materially reduces the time
 34 required to find lost persons, often to less than one-half hour
 35 after the person is reported missing, within which period there
 36 is a 100-percent recovery rate, and

37 WHEREAS, 13 Florida counties and 5 police departments have
 38 implemented a version of Project Lifesaver, and Pasco County
 39 residents have taken the lead in extending the program
 40 statewide, NOW, THEREFORE,

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 42 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 44 Section 1. Project Lifesaver.--

45 (1) The Legislature encourages each county in this state
 46 to implement a county lifesaver project that is modeled after
 47 Project Lifesaver, a search-and-rescue program designed to
 48 quickly find a lost or wandering person who is mentally impaired
 49 due to Alzheimer's disease, autism, Down's syndrome, or other
 50 causes. The program uses small transmitters, which are usually
 51 worn on a participant's wrist, to electronically track lost or
 52 wandering participants. A law enforcement agency, usually the
 53 sheriff's office, is equipped with receivers that track the
 54 transmitters.

55 (2) The Department of Law Enforcement shall serve as the
 56 liaison to county lifesaver projects and shall administer the

57 state grant moneys awarded for the purpose of starting the
58 projects. The maximum amount that a county may receive for
59 startup is \$10,000, and the amount awarded must be matched 50-50
60 by county funds, such as funds obtained from the forfeited
61 property of drug dealers.

62 (3) To initiate Project Lifesaver in a county, the
63 sheriff's office must approve the implementation. If the county
64 approves initiating the project in the 2007-2008 fiscal year,
65 the sheriff's office must, by October 1, 2008, submit to the
66 department an application that includes:

67 (a) An estimate of the number of people who might qualify
68 for assistance;

69 (b) An estimate of the startup cost;

70 (c) A statement of the number of personnel available for
71 tracking lost individuals; and

72 (d) The source or sources and the amount of local funds
73 available for matching state grant moneys.

74 (4) The department must prioritize the grant awards in
75 accordance with the respective counties' needs for tracking
76 services and the availability of local funding sources, as
77 documented in the applications. Awards to qualifying counties
78 must be prorated in accordance with the availability of state
79 funds.

80 (5) With the initial grant money and local matching funds,
81 the county sheriff's office shall purchase emergency response
82 kits, which include equipment necessary to track and triangulate
83 searches, as well as transmitters, and shall provide 3 days'
84 training for up to 17 deputies. Through its community resource

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85 officer, the sheriff's office shall solicit moneys from private
86 sources so as to assure that within 3 years the program will be
87 self-supporting and will not require state funding.

88 Section 2. The sum of \$670,000 is appropriated from the
89 General Revenue Fund to the Department of Law Enforcement for
90 the purpose of awarding grants to counties that qualify under
91 this act to start county lifesaver projects during the 2007-2008
92 fiscal year.

93 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2007.